United Nations E/2012/55

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 April 2012

Original: English

Substantive session of 2012
New York, 2-27 July 2012
Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Letter dated 16 April 2012 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

In regard to the preparations of the national voluntary presentation, I have the honour to attach herewith the national report of the State of Qatar on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for the annual ministerial review to be held during the high-level segment of the 2012 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July at United Nations Headquarters in New York (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Council, under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Yousef Sultan **Laram**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* E/2012/100.

12-30048 (E) 070512 140512

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 16 April 2012 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: Arabic]

Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016: The Human Development Dimension

Executive summary

The Qatar National Vision 2030, which was launched in October 2008, builds a bridge from the present to the future. It aims to transform Qatar into an advanced country, ensuring sustainable development and providing a high standard of living for the current and future generations.

The National Vision provides a broad framework for Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011-2016. The Strategy charts the medium term transformations that will make Qatar a prosperous and creative society, one that contributes to and is connected with the world while preserving its unique identity.

The Strategy, the first of its kind in Qatar, is the culmination of extensive stakeholder consultations, dialogues and analyses. The positive and unprecedented engagement of multiple stakeholders reflects a genuine desire for reform that best serves the national interests. The consultation process began with ministers and key leaders from government, private sector and civil society, and was then extended to society as a whole.

The programmes and projects identified in the Strategy are aligned with the goals of the National Vision and include specific outcomes and targets. They are based on 14 sector strategies and draw on intensive consultations, taking into consideration the many cross-sectoral links. In order to ensure the interests and engagement of youth in the Strategy's programmes, Qatar prepared its third National Human Development Report, entitled "Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth: Mainstreaming Young People in Development".

Qatar will continue to invest in its people so that all can participate fully in the country's social, economic and political life and function effectively within a competitive knowledge-based international order. The Government is putting in place advanced health and education systems that meet the highest global standards.

Qatar's transformation into a diversified knowledge economy with increased private-sector participation depends on upgrading and enhancing the education, knowledge and skills of Qataris. The coordination of those economic objectives requires a transition from the current low-skill, low-productivity and low-wage economy to a high-skill, high-productivity and high-wage economy. Creating a more productive, skilled and motivated labour force requires major labour market reforms, especially to encourage Qataris to participate in the private sector.

The regulatory and legal framework is being reviewed with a view to attracting and retaining a skilled expatriate workforce in support of the Government's development vision. In order to attract and retain the right mix of skills, further incentives are being created to improve the working and living environments.

Many of the challenges and opportunities set out in the Strategy transcend the traditional boundaries of individual public agencies, and thus require a high degree of interagency cooperation. Institutional development and modernization are a critical enabler for driving change, achieving the outcomes and specific targets of the Strategy in all sectors, and realizing the goals of the National Vision.

In order to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy, a Supreme Committee for Development Planning was established by a decree of the Amir. The ministries and other Government agencies have integrated the development programmes and projects into their executive plans.

Context of the National Development Strategy: the Qatar National Vision 2030

The Qatar National Vision 2030, which was launched in October 2008, builds a bridge from the present to the future. It aims to transform Qatar into an advanced country, ensuring sustainable development and providing a high standard of living for the current and future generations. It aspires to a vibrant and prosperous Qatar with economic and social justice for all. It envisages all Qataris working together to pursue those aspirations, their efforts guided by with strong Islamic and family values.

The National Vision is based on the realization of justice, benevolence and equality. It embodies the principles of the Permanent Constitution, which protects public and personal freedoms, promotes moral and religious values and traditions, and guarantees security, stability and equal opportunities. In accordance with those principles, the National Vision is based on four pillars:

Human development — to enable all of Qatar's inhabitants to sustain a prosperous society;

Social development — to maintain a just and caring society based on high moral standards and capable of playing a prominent role in the global partnership for development;

Economic development — to achieve a competitive and diversified economy capable of meeting the needs of, and securing a high standard of living for, all its current and future inhabitants;

Environmental development — to harmonize economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

The National Vision thus defines broad future trends and reflects the aspirations, objectives and culture of the Qatari people. By shedding light on the choices available, it encourages the Qatari people to develop a set of common goals related to their future, and provides the framework for Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011-2016.

Qatar's management of its hydrocarbon resources will continue to secure improvements in living standards, but those improvements cannot be the only goal of society. The Strategy thus aims to balance five major challenges identified in the National Vision:

(i) Modernization and the preservation of traditions;

(ii) Balancing the needs of the current and future generations;

(iii) Managing economic growth and avoiding uncontrolled expansion;

(iv) Ensuring that the size and quality of the expatriate labour force is commensurate with the planned development process;

(v) Harmonizing economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

Formulating the National Development Strategy 2011-2016

The Strategy, the first of its kind in Qatar, is the culmination of extensive stakeholder consultations, dialogues and analyses. The positive and unprecedented engagement of multiple stakeholders reflects a genuine desire for reform that best serves the national interests. The consultation process began with ministers and key leaders from government, private sector and civil society, and was then extended to society as a whole. In order to reflect the broad scope of the Strategy, cross-sectoral working groups were formed, including representatives from ministries, other Government agencies, private-sector companies and civil society organizations. The extensive inter-sectoral consultations, including interviews, workshops, debates and research, were highly important in order to gain a strong and positive sense of ownership on the part of Qatar's inhabitants from the outset.

The Strategy adopts a clear methodology based on situational analyses, diagnostics, regional and international benchmarking and detailed strategies for each of the 14 sectors encompassing the full range of activities in the State of Qatar. The situational analyses identified priority areas using baseline analyses of Qatar's situation and benchmarking against best practices in other countries in the region and around the world. The reports on the 14 sectoral strategies identify priority areas and numerous initiatives to support each proposed programme and project, including core requirements, responsibilities, timelines and key indicators.

Each sectoral strategy includes a basic monitoring and evaluation framework, supported by selected indicators that are regularly monitored during implementation in order to make any adjustments that may be needed.

The programmes and projects identified in the Strategy are aligned with the goals of the National Vision and include specific outcomes and targets. They are based on the 14 sector strategies and draw on intensive consultations, taking into consideration the many cross-sectoral links. The sectoral strategies provide transparent in-depth analysis, benchmarks, diagnostics and priorities for each of the programmes and projects.

The targets set out in the Strategy are drawn from the sectoral strategies that were developed by the sectoral working groups, drawing on stakeholder inputs, and adopted by executive groups. They are both quantitative and qualitative, and focus is on the results to be achieved by 2016. They will be reviewed and refined, as necessary, by key stakeholders when the programmes and projects are implemented.

The Strategy is a comprehensive plan of action that introduces new initiatives while building existing ones. The current programmes, policies and institutions give it added impetus and focus.

Sustaining prosperity

Qatar has built a solid foundation on which to base the Strategy. In the early 2000s, Qatar witnessed the most rapid growth anywhere in the world, which gave it one of the world's highest levels of per capita income measured in purchasing power parity terms. High public and private-sector savings have been reflected in substantial domestic investment and the accumulation of a substantial pool of foreign currency assets.

The National Vision articulates three interrelated economic goals: sustaining a high standard of living, expanding innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities and aligning economic outcomes with economic and financial stability.

It defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In order to embed sustainability in Qatar's economy, progress is needed in three balanced and mutually reinforcing directions.

First, the country will enlarge the value of the productive base, which is necessary in order to sustain prosperity in a growing population and expand potential for future generations. Second, the Government will guard against economic instability and promote efficiency. Third, the government will work in partnership with the private sector to diversify the economy and encourage a culture of innovation and discovery.

Human development

The human development pillar of the National Vision calls for the development of all Qatar's inhabitants to enable them to sustain a prosperous society and to meet the needs of this generation without compromising the needs of future generations. Qatar will continue to invest in its people so that all can participate fully in the country's social, economic and political life and function effectively within a competitive knowledge-based international order. The Government is putting in place advanced health and education systems that meet the highest global standards. It is also supporting the productive participation of Qatari men and women in the labour force, while attracting qualified expatriate workers in all fields, with a growing emphasis on the higher-skilled.

Nurturing a healthy population

Under the leadership of the Supreme Council of Health, Qatar will develop an integrated health-care system that meets the highest global standards, is accessible to the entire population, with public and private institutions offering effective and affordable services in accordance with the principle of cost-sharing partnerships. The Council will determine a national health policy and monitor social, economic, technical and administrative health-care standards. The health-care system will help all of the inhabitants of Qatar to live longer and healthier lives. Preventive and curative care will take into account the different needs of men, women and children. High-quality research will focus on public health, biomedicine and clinical effectiveness.

Challenges for health care

In order to achieve the goals of the National Vision for the health sector, Qatar needs to overcome multiple challenges:

- There is an imbalance in the model of care, which must shift from hospital-based care to a full continuum of care by enhancing primary health care and community-based services, while ensuring that acute care services meet the needs of the population.
- Morbidity and mortality patterns reflect a high prevalence non-communicable diseases, including chronic diseases and those linked to lifestyle and behaviour, as well as a high rate of injuries, primarily from road traffic accidents and workplace-related incidents.
- A rapidly increasing population with a high turnover, with high numbers of single male workers places, increasing demands on the health-care system, accentuating the mismatch between health-care needs and the current system.
- Studies show that 70 per cent of deaths in Qatar are a result of chronic illnesses, injuries and congenital diseases. The integrated health-care system will address those three principal causes of mortality, along with the underlying risk factors.
- Chronic diseases account for more than half of deaths. It is a matter of particular concern that 16.4 per cent of Qataris suffer from diabetes, well above the global average of 6.4 per cent. That disease burden — the fourth highest in the world — generates long-term disabilities and high costs for the Government. Studies have found high rates of asthma and cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of other chronic conditions, particularly mental health conditions, is also thought to be high but could be under-diagnosed for cultural reasons.
- Injuries from road and workplace accidents are common among single male workers, who make up about two thirds of the population. Qatar needs to address the roots of those health risks and of communicable diseases, which tend to increase with a growing migrant population.
- The mismatch between health-care needs and the current system is accentuated by the country's high population growth and the growing numbers of single male workers. That situation has overloaded the system, exacerbating the overemphasis on hospital-based acute care as compared with long-term wellness programmes and preventative care.
- Qatari health-care spending has risen fivefold since 2001. Population growth is one obvious explanation, but there are other contributing factors. Improved monitoring and control, with appropriate national health-care accountability standards and budgeting systems, will strengthen efforts to control costs. A functioning health insurance system could improve the effectiveness of service delivery, but Qatar must first lay the foundations for such a system.
- While the upward trend in deaths from road traffic accidents has stabilized, they remain the main cause of death among Qatari and non-Qatari youth, particularly men. Road traffic accident deaths involve not only drivers and

passengers, but also pedestrians who account for almost a third of annual deaths, most of them among non-Qataris aged 30 and older.

- Qatar's efforts to address that problem have not had the desired impact. Penalties for traffic offences are severe, but not always enforced. Most offences, such as speeding and failure to comply with traffic junction signals, are detected by radar and cameras, and police patrols are limited. There are, however, potential alternatives to the penalty points system. New initiatives for improving road safety must now focus on behavioural changes among young Qatari men.

Healthy lifestyles

Sports and physical activity are integral parts of a healthy lifestyles. They decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and stroke, contributing to a healthy lifestyle and minimizing excessive weight gain.

Health and physical education are essential to the school curriculum, and special emphasis should placed on physical education classes in primary and secondary schools. Sports activities such as running, cycling, swimming and aerobics are essential for obesity control and weight management and need to be continuously encouraged.

Qatar is proud of its recent achievements in sports, including the expansion of all types of sporting activities and participation in international competitions. Sports management and youth development are administered by independent agencies, which promote the active sports movement and encourage healthy practices, physical activity and regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Through its Aspire Active programme, the Aspire Academy for Sports Excellence offers a range of recreational physical activities and fitness courses for young men, women and children. Aspire Active has had unprecedented success in contributing to well-being through aerobics, circuit training, body training, yoga, Pilates, swimming, martial arts and mother and toddler classes.

The Global Sport Fund is a United Nations initiative supported by the Qatar Olympic Committee. It helps young people aged from 11 to 17 to live safer and more peaceful lives through sports while teaching them to play by the rules, engage in teamwork and show respect for each others. The Fund uses sports to improve physical and mental health, reinforce positive social skills, and protect youth from the temptation of drug use and juvenile delinquency. It organizes periodic youth camps in Qatar and elsewhere, the most recent of which was held in Doha. These camps have allowed young Qataris to practise sports with similar children from other countries at home and abroad.

Programmes

The health-care system will provide a full continuum of health care through a patient-centred approach, addressing both physical and mental health needs. The system will encourage prevention while also ensuring the availability of evidence-based curative services. Health-care services will be provided by public and private institutions guided by a national health policy setting forth social, economic, administrative and technical health-care standards. High-calibre research will be directed at improving effectiveness and quality.

Building knowledge and skills

Under the leadership of the Supreme Education Council, Qatar will build a modern, world-class education and training system providing a first-rate education comparable to that offered in the best schools, universities and technical colleges in the world. That system will incorporate programmes that encourage analytical thinking, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, while promoting social cohesion and respect for Qatari values. The system will provide opportunities for students to develop their full potential and prepare them for success in a world with ever-greater technical challenges. It will raise performance at all levels and offer pathways for education and training beyond the secondary level, including for lifelong learning. It will also expand the capacities of professional staff.

In addition to public and private kindergarten and basic education, the Qatar Foundation offers outstanding education from kindergarten to secondary school. For example, the Awsaj Institute of Education aims to raise the educational performance of pupils with learning difficulties, engages in partnerships with stakeholders to develop the pupils' abilities and potential, and develops and promotes the application and assessment tools, teaching methods and curricula to train highly effective teachers. The Awsaj Institute includes two institutes: the Awsaj Academy, a school for pupils with learning difficulties from kindergarten to the 12th year, and the Awsaj Centre for Teaching and Learning, which offers specialized services for students who more individual attention and provides professional development for teachers.

In 1998, in a visionary and forward-looking initiative, the Qatar Foundation through established Education City, a state-of-the-art international campus and learning environment. Initially occupied by the Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, by 2011 it had expanded to include nine Government-assisted branch campuses of globally recognised universities, offering Bachelor's and Master's degrees in various fields of specialization. Education City universities currently account for almost 10 per cent of all Qatari tertiary enrolment. Admission standards and programme accreditations are the same as those of mother institutions in Europe and the United States of America. The Academic Bridge Programme provides secondary school graduates with English pre-university courses to help them meet university entry requirements. The fees for Qatari students at those institutions are paid by the Government or a corporate sponsor such as Qatar Petroleum.

Challenges for education and training

Qatar's education and training system must be comprehensive and integrated, stretching from early childhood education through to higher-level education and training. Engrained in this system is the concept of lifelong learning: individuals should be encouraged to acquire education and update their skills throughout their lives. The continuum spans three education sectors: general education, higher education, and technical education and vocational training. While each sector has a distinct identity, mission and function, the sectors need to operate within an overarching framework that embodies policy-related principles. Both education and training need to establish stronger links with Qatar's labour market.

Quality is critical in ensuring outcomes that address the needs of current and future labour markets. The challenge is how to achieve consistent and sustained quality across sectors. The quality of teachers, trainers, lecturers and education

planners is a prerequisite. It therefore requires a commitment on the part of all sectors, at every level of education, that train academic and educational specialists or monitor their qualifications and development. Attention to quality should be at the forefront of efforts to develop educational standards, curricula and materials; provide resources for schools and education centres; and improve information and communication technology and governance. Such action will help to improve pupils' performance at all levels, particularly in science, mathematics and languages. It is essential to increase the number of pupils, especially males, who continue on to tertiary education, which guarantees them a higher economic return.

Equity and inclusiveness also cut across all education and training sectors. Lifelong learning should enable all members of society to acquire, develop and update their skills throughout their lives. Appropriate training and education should be available and accessible to all. Meeting the stated aim of accessible educational programmes for lifelong learning, in a context of participation and inclusion, will require policies that overcome socioeconomic barriers of age, gender and geography.

In order to achieve inclusiveness, private schools should be further expanded in line with growing demand among Qatari and expatriate children. Qatari parents are paying the fees, in increasing amounts, to send their children to international schools. The ultimate goal is to allow all Qatari pupils to participate; school fees should no longer be a driving factor in choosing a school. Competition is expected to emerge not only among independent schools, but also between the public and private sectors, thus promoting variety and choice.

The improvement in private school standards since they came under the remit of the Supreme Education Council are one possible reason for their growing attendance rates. Another factor that cannot be ignored is the growth in reverse migration owing to the establishment of independent schools, which often provide a better education than many private schools.

Portability and mobility are another key policy theme for the promotion of variety and choice. Pupils and other stakeholders in the education and training system expect institutions and employers to recognize their qualifications and grant credit for previous studies. In addition, pupils and stakeholders expect flexible career and study pathways to entering and re-entering the education and training systems without penalty. That approach maximizes citizens' flexibility in planning their careers without being constrained by their location or stage in life.

In order to realize Qatar's vision of providing opportunities for citizens to achieve their full potential, Qataris must be able to move easily from one education or training option to another, and from those options to the workplace. Educational pathways can no longer be considered a linear progression through a vertical hierarchy of qualifications. Vertical and horizontal pathways are needed, both within and across sectors and institutions. The National Qualifications Framework will strengthen coordination and integration of the education and training systems. That function is fulfilled through the endorsement of school certificates in basic education and through a system of degree equivalences at the university level.

Qatar has invested heavily in best practice models of education. It will continue to do so in order to adapt and mould basic and higher education to meet the skill requirements of a more diversified economy, while respecting Qatar's cultural

values and national heritage. The proportion of Government spending on education has grown markedly in recent years and now exceeds the average for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries and for all Gulf Cooperation Council countries except Saudi Arabia.

Programmes

The education and training initiatives of the Strategy build on continuous reforms addressing quality, equity, inclusiveness and portability and mobility. Those themes will guide policy decisions and the provision of variety and choice. The reforms will tackle a number of critical challenges and opportunities affecting supply of and demand for education and training. Such challenges include Qatari pupils' weak performance in Mathematics, Sciences and English at all levels, and various shortcomings in educational administration and the teaching profession. The curriculum will be better aligned with the needs of the labour market and more supportive of Qatari values. There will be multiple pathways beyond secondary level, including technical and vocational courses, in order to encourage higher post-secondary enrolments and better meet the needs of the labour market.

Fostering a capable and motivated workforce

Through the Ministry of Labour, Qatar will expand the capacities of the labour force, preparing it to move from a hydrocarbon economy to a diversified knowledge economy in which the private sector is a key stakeholder. Qatar will seek to meet the needs of high-income professions in high value-added sectors, combining economic objectives with the social priority of preserving national identity. Labour market reforms will foster a productive labour force and encourage more Qataris to work in the private sector. For the foreseeable future, however, Qatar will not have enough citizens to meet the expanding requirements of a rapidly growing, diversifying and technologically advanced economy. In order to counter that shortfall, Qatar must attract and retain expatriates with the right mix of skills.

Challenges for employment

The labour market is highly segmented, with heavy concentrations of Qataris in the public sector and expatriates in the private sector, especially in construction and services. It is important to develop skills and improve the effective labour force participation of Qataris while also so is establishing the regulatory and legal frameworks needed to attract and retain a skilled expatriate workforce to support the National Vision. The latter stresses the importance of expatriate workers and recognizes that Qatar will not, in the foreseeable future, have a sufficient number of citizens to manage the complex systems, infrastructure and other requirements of a rapidly growing, diversifying and technologically sophisticated economy.

As in many resource-rich economies, the private sector in Qatar has thus far played a limited role. Estimates of the private-sector share of aggregate output put it at around 35 per cent. However, the private sector has a much greater profile in employment, with large numbers of workers, predominantly expatriate, in construction and retail trade. Those two sectors have expanded markedly as a result of mega-infrastructure projects and rapidly growing consumption demand from the expatriate population. The share of Qataris in the labour force has thus declined by over one half, from 14 per cent in 2001 to 6 per cent in 2009.

Challenges for the labour market

Qatar is seeking a development path compatible with the desired size and quality of expatriate labour. As a part of that process, Qatar will continue to weigh the economic benefits of greater numbers of expatriate workers against the costs of meeting the health, education, housing and public service needs of those workers and their dependents, as well as their impact on national identity and culture.

Success will depend largely on whether incentives and regulatory policies can transform the private sector into a high-productivity, high-wage economy and whether Qataris compete with expatriates for work in the private sector. Action should be taken to progressively rebalance immigration policies and encourage higher value-added and capital-intensive employment.

The current employment sponsorship system have several effects on Qatar's labour market.

First, the open sponsorship system encourage the recruitment low-cost expatriate workers and discourage the employment of Qataris and the adoption of advanced technologies, resulting in a low wage, labour-intensive, low-productivity economy. The cost of importing low-skilled expatriate workers is heavily subsidized.

Second, the sponsorship system limits the mobility of expatriates and thus their ability to respond to labour market needs. A rigid labour market hampers the development of a workforce that meets the needs of a knowledge-based economy.

Despite rapid economic development and efforts to improve male education, labour force participation rates of Qatari men are low and declining: large numbers of men leave the labour force at an early age. There are significant challenges to increasing effective male participation in the labour force. More men need to continue on to tertiary education, and education attainment levels need to rise. Currently, Qataris have little incentive to excel in education and training.

By contrast, labour force participation of Qatari women has grown sharply in recent years, consistent with their rising education levels and the ready availability of low-cost domestic help. There is considerable scope for participation to rise further, as it still lags well behind that of many high income countries.

In recent years, Qatari unemployment rates have been exceptionally low. The unemployed are primarily first-time job-seekers and people with a strong preference for particular sector. Most of them are women. There are, however, concerns regarding hidden unemployment and declining labour productivity.

New Qatari job-seekers prefer to join the public sector, which is their leading employer. The efforts of the public sector to increase the participation of Qataris are therefore reinforced by affirmative employment policies in all other sectors. For example, the energy industry, led by Qatar Petroleum, has been at the forefront in promoting Qatari participation in the mixed and private sectors. The industry recruits young high school graduates, sponsors them through scholarship programmes in vocational and university training and provides rapid career development paths, including in-house training. The recruits then enter a wide range of positions within the industry, such as operations, maintenance, engineering, finance, administration, and human resources.

Programmes

In order to realize the goal of a capable and engaged workforce, young Qataris need to be motivated and incentivized to take advantage of the many opportunities for post-secondary education and training. Qatar will move from numerical targets for the employment of Qataris towards an emphasis market-based mechanisms that link wages to productivity. Qataris, especially of youth and women, will be encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills in order to gain better representation in the private sector. Barriers to entrepreneurship will be examined and initiatives will be launched, including management opportunities and capacity-building at home and abroad in areas relevant to national labour market needs.

The regulatory and legal framework needed to attract and retain a skilled expatriate workforce to support the nation's development vision will be reviewed and strengthened. Qatar will create further incentives to improve the working and living environments in order to attract and retain the right mix of skills. If necessary, Qatar's sponsorship programme will be reviewed with input from employers and employees.

Increasing women's empowerment

Gender has been mainstreamed in the programmes and projects of all sectors of the Strategy. In each case, a comprehensive situation analysis and international benchmarks have been taken into account. In the area of employment, specific initiatives are in place to upgrade the skills of women and encourage them to participate more prominently in the private sector by removing barriers and constraints and encouraging female entrepreneurship. Qatar is also implementing measures to improve the work life balance for women, such as reviewing the 2009 Law on Human Resource Administration. Qatar has put in place several other programmes and projects to further empower women.

Women's educational capacities and their ability to assume political and leadership positions are generally recognized. However, owing to residual cultural attitudes, there are also negative views regarding the scope of women's work and their broader capacities. But there is also a culturally conditioned underestimation of scope and ability overall. While legislation has helped increase Qatari women's participation in the labour force, traditional views about appropriate areas for women's employment (educational, administrative or clerical) prevail, despite the new opportunities created by Qatar's economic development. In 2009, only 3 per cent of economically active Qatari women were in leadership positions. Over the past ten years, that number has varied between 2 and 4 per cent. Although women have higher average educational attainment level than men, there appear to be contrasting views regarding women's work and professional advancement.

The empowerment of women, a goal that is enshrined in the National Vision, is further hindered by stereotypes regarding their role and social responsibilities. Over the past decade, women have voted in growing numbers and are now represented in the Municipal Council. The total number of women in decision-making positions has increased. However, women still face numerous barriers to political life, such as a lack of awareness regarding the significance of the political process and adverse social and cultural attitudes. In a 2007 survey, 28 per cent of Qatari men and women opposed female participation in politics. Women are no doubt central to the evolving

character of the Qatari family, but they can contribute far more to society than their role in the home.

Programmes

The Government will establish a women's leadership centre to build women's capacities and increase their representation in political, organizational and managerial decision-making positions. At the same time, an awareness programme will promote the role of women across all sectors of the Strategy.

Fostering cross-sectoral links

A distinctive feature of Qatar's first National Development Strategy is its incorporation of cross-sectoral linkages and relationships in order to ensure successful outcomes.

Successful implementation of the Strategy is critical not only for the development of human capital and labour market efficiency, but also in order to achieve other goals of the National Vision. Investment in quality education and training, including lifelong learning opportunities, along with efforts to change attitudes to work, will help Qatar achieve its chosen development path.

Education and labour force participation are highly correlated. In order to achieve Qatar's labour market goals, the education and training system must be closely connected with and relevant to the needs of the workplace. Increased awareness of the returns of education and training could encourage Qataris to stay in school longer and improve their educational performance and attainment.There is a need for better access to information on training and employment opportunities for job seekers, especially youth, and career counselling and guidance, in order promote education and training and better inform Qatari youth of the economic returns to post-secondary education.

The links among education, training and employment policies require that policymaking and decision-making within each sector should also be linked. Appropriate institutional arrangements should be in place in order to provide policy guidance for the labour market and for education and training.

Developing modern public sector institutions

Qatar needs strong public sector institutions to reach the goals of the National Vision in the areas of social progress, human development, economic diversification and environmental sustainability. Achieving those goals will require institutional and organizational capacity building, efficient and transparent delivery of public services, fruitful public-private cooperation and partnerships, a vibrant climate for business and a larger space for civil society. Qatar's government structure includes ministries, Supreme Councils and other Government agencies.

Qatar's public administration institutions are evolving rapidly and striving to meet the needs of citizens and clients. The Public Sector Development Project of 2007 recommended changes to the institutional framework in order to provide effective quality services. The Government therefore restructured its administrative structure, moving towards a portfolio-based approach focusing accountability for a given policy within one ministry, improving governance, focusing on outcomes,

increasing inter-agency coordination and reducing disconnectedness in decision-making.

Improved service delivery depends on credible, client-focused and capable institutions that deliver timely and accountable services to citizens and respond to their concerns. That goal will in turn require an unwavering commitment to modernizing all aspects of Government across all sectors and areas of society. The continuous search for institutional efficiency will strengthen Qatar in prosperous times and make it better resistant to crisis.

Moving from Strategy to implementation

The Strategy is comprehensive and multidimensional. Each part entails different challenges, so careful implementation will be vital to its success. Implementation mechanisms are being put in place, but the pace of progress needs to be accelerated in order to achieve the desired results. In 2011, the Amir of the State of Qatar established a Supreme Committee for Development Planning under the Heir Apparent in order to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy.

Ministries and agencies are taking ownership of the Strategy, developing their own operational plans and accepting accountability for delivery. At the centre, the Strategy is beginning to influence processes that drive decisions on resource use and providing operational tools for the integrated assessment of each project and policy proposal. Major challenges are anticipated, particularly in building the human and institutional capabilities for effective planning and project execution, but also in providing the legal basis for some proposed innovations.

Successful implementation of Qatar's first National Development Strategy requires, inter alia, overcoming human resource constraints; developing an appropriate fiscal architecture; bridging information and knowledge gaps; ensuring effective communication and advocacy; and monitoring and evaluation at all levels. It also requires the full commitment of all sectors and of all inhabitants of the State of Qatar.